An Open Letter to New Cleveland Community College Interim President and Board of Trustees. –And Public Record Requests –By Robert A. Williams

August 6, 2017

Dear Dr. Aiken and the Cleveland Community College Board of Trustees,

My first reports from Cleveland Community College regarding Dr. Aiken taking over as Interim President on August 1, 2017 was that there was a lot of "apple polishing" going on at CCC. Next I see the agenda for the August 8, 2017 Board of Trustees meeting and there are the same presenters as before the recent "scandals" broke, giving the impression that everything is again business as usual at CCC. Then I see Dr. Aiken's first email message to the CCC administration and staff that states in part "While little will be gained by focusing on the past, I hope that we can rebuild community confidence and campus morale quickly. I look forward to meeting each of you. I will soon visit each department and confirm the many fine things that are already occurring. Feel free to visit me and share your ideas of how we can make improvements in the campus. Change can be healthy especially when it is accompanied by viable solutions."

I would like to take a few moments to make some comments and explain in detail just how disappointed and concerned I am with the direction CCC appears to be taking.

First, I will say that most of you already know that I am no “apple polisher” and I make no apologies for that. I have spent all of my working career in the nuclear engineering field where the path to excellence is only found by finding and fixing problems, never by phony press releases falsely proclaiming “Happy Days are Here Again!” A perfect example of failing to comprehend this concept was the shutting down just this week of a new generation of nuclear plant being constructed near Columbia, SC. 5,000 workers were dismissed and billions of dollars were lost.

Now, to the point at Cleveland Community College.

Such a statement as “little will be gained by focusing on the past” in the present situation at CCC is totally false, misleading and a planned deception. Again, “Code Words” for business as usual.” Scandals at CCC are not in the “past” just because the CCC Board of Trustees have spent over six months in gridlock. The scandals are still smack dab in the “present” at CCC and those scandals, problems and issues talked about all over CCC and Cleveland County for months now are just as real today as they were ten years ago when they first started to surface and nothing was done. Replacing Former CCC President Thornburg was only the start of the problem fixing process at CCC, not the end of that process. Any objective evaluation of CCC will tell you that. Rebuilding community confidence (receiving donations from the public) in CCC will never occur by such “moving forward” propaganda as the new Interim President and the same old gridlocked Board of Trustees seems to insist they are doing. People in Cleveland County are smarter that you apparently think they are.

Next, I see from certain documents that the newest investigation of past employee complaints and concerns will only be two days spent investigating the records of the original investigation that was previously conducted without even speaking to those employees who made the complaints and voiced their concerns in the first place, right before being

dismissed from CCC for their trouble. By all indications this latest investigation plan will be a cover-up of a cover-up. Any “hope that we (CCC) can rebuild community confidence and campus morale quickly” is just wishful thinking. All you have to do is look at the present Cleveland County School Board Elections to see that the simple booting out of CCS Superintendent Dr. Bruce Boyles, “fixing” an audit of fraudulent school credit card charges, the DA’s Office refusing to press charges and withholding information from the public and other miscellaneous cover-ups never fixed anything at CCS and the same old problems just keep festering. Why the CCC Interim President and Board of Trustees would follow such a path of failure is well beyond reasonable comprehension.

Therefore, I plan to do an independent investigation of my own regarding the many scandals, issues and problems at CCC. I will enlist assistance as necessary to evaluate the situation such that all sides and angles are considered. I plan to interview all concerned and involved and provide an independent report to the Citizens of Cleveland County of my findings.

To accomplish this, please consider this portion of this letter as an official request, Under the Freedom of Information Act and North Carolina Public Records laws, to inspect and be able to copy as necessary:

1. Every document, report, email, records, recordings and meeting minutes that were generated in the original investigation as well as those conducted by this second investigation regarding the scandals, issues and problems at CCC. Basically, I want to see everything that the investigator sees, determine if anything has been left out and go from there.

2. The right to be present and record any and all polygraph (lie detector) testing as well as inspect all records, documents and questions involved and developed from such

testing.

My authority to ask for the items noted above arise from North Carolina and Federal Law and the United States Constitution as well as the fact that I am a citizen and resident of Cleveland County, North Carolina and the United States of America.

Please provide your assistance in assuring that my legally allowed requests for the information asked for is provided in a prompt manner as presently the few requests for information that I have made appear to be “slow-walked” within your system at CCC. I am certain those delays are by the direction of top level CCC personnel and are an indication of cover-up all by itself. I will consider any unusual delays and obstructions to my investigation to be the same.

If you have any comments or questions, please call me at 704-538-8257 or email me at raw@shelby.net. I will protect the identity of those members of the public or CCC Staff and administration that would like to remain anonymous in their communications with me.

Regards,

Robert A. Williams